

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 269

By Bailey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Chancellor Vernon Neal.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of our friend and former colleague Chancellor Vernon Neal; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Neal was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on October 10, 1931, in Byrdstown, to Levi Piercen and Mary Della Neal, Vernon Neal received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1951 from Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, now Tennessee Technological University (TTU), and earned a Juris Doctor degree in 1956 from the University of Tennessee College of Law; and

WHEREAS, after his admittance to the bar in 1957, he established his own legal practice that same year and continued to practice law until 1980, when he was elected Chancellor of the 13th Judicial District. He served in that position for twenty-five years, presiding over more than 35,000 cases; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Neal served as Algood City Attorney from 1959 to 1963, and in 1962, he ran for public office and was elected to serve in the House of Representatives as a member of the 83rd and 84th General Assemblies from 1963 to 1967, representing Putnam County; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the House of Representatives, Vernon Neal sponsored legislation permitting counties to elect school board members and road supervisors, strengthened laws that made it more difficult for public figures to mishandle public funds, and supported area training for the mentally and physically disabled; and

WHEREAS, elected to the Senate in 1966, Chancellor Neal served his constituents with distinction as Senator for six terms from 1967 to 1979, representing Putnam, Bledsoe, Clay, DeKalb, Jackson, Overton, Van Buren, White, and later, Rhea and Pickett counties; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure in the Senate, Chancellor Neal sponsored or supported legislation that required PKU screening for all newborn infants; established public educational television; gave university status to Tennessee Technological College, now Tennessee Technological University; and acquired state funding for Burgess Falls State Park and for the expansion of TTU, specifically Tucker Stadium, Hooper Eblen Center, and Bryant Fine Arts; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Neal worked tirelessly to help the citizens of his district and rendered sterling service as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Vocational Rehabilitation, member of the Judiciary Committee and the Energy and Environment Committee, and as secretary of the Education Committee. He was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor to chair the State Calendar Committee in his final term in office; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Neal lent his time and talents to a number of professional and civic organizations, serving as a member of the American Bar Association, the American Trial Lawyers Association, the Tennessee Bar Association, and as a member and president of the Putnam County Bar Association; he was also a member of Free and Accepted Masons, Order of the Mystic Shrine, Optimist Club, and board member of Upper Cumberland Development District, Pacesetters, and the Vocational Training Center in Cookeville; and

WHEREAS, a recognized leader, Vernon Neal was named in *Outstanding Young Men of America* in 1964 and was honored by the "Friends of Education" at TTU; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Neal was an active and devout member of the Baptist church, which he served faithfully for many years as a deacon and Sunday School teacher. He also served as a member of the executive board of the Stone Association of Baptists; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Neal was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Vernon Neal enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of fifty-nine years, Mona Joyce Mahan, and was the proud father of three children: Belinda (Tim)

Mandrell, Jeffrey (Leana) Neal, and Melissa (Paul) Gogonelis, and the devoted grandfather of five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Neal leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of our former colleague Chancellor Vernon Neal, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character as a legislator, public servant, and human being, and commend his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Chancellor Neal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.